

# Consular Newsletter

February 2005



Embassy of the United States  
of America, Ljubljana, Slovenia

## Ambassador's Note

I am very happy to welcome you to the first issue of our new quarterly Consular Newsletter. I look forward to being able to use our newsletter to communicate with you about issues of importance to all of us living and visiting in Slovenia. At the outset, I want you to know that I, and all of us at the Embassy, have no higher priority than the protection of American citizens in Slovenia. Communicating with you quickly and efficiently is an important part of that responsibility. Our partners in this effort, our "wardens," are Americans who have volunteered to assist the Embassy in maintaining contact with Americans in their areas. In case of a crisis, the warden in your zone will pass vital information to you. We are fortunate to have a great group of wardens looking out for your welfare.

Do you have a mobile phone? If you do, please make sure our consular staff has your number. Here's why: soon we will begin text-messaging Americans to alert them when we issue a Public Announcement. The brief text message will direct you to check your email or the Embassy's website. And by the way, we've updated our website as well. It's been redesigned to be more informative and easier to navigate.

Finally, as I noted above, we've created this newsletter to inform you about issues that affect you as resident Americans. We hope you find the information useful. Let us know what you think of it and contact us if you need assistance. Thanks for taking a few minutes to review the newsletter and for helping us keep you informed.

Best wishes for your continued stay in Slovenia!

- Thomas B. Robertson  
Ambassador



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## **Crisis Planning: Help Us Help You**

The recent Tsunami disaster in South Asia reminds us how important it is to be prepared for emergencies. In Slovenia we're unlikely to be hit by a tsunami, but earthquakes are a realistic threat, as are flooding, avalanches, etc. The Consular Section is responsible for assisting American citizens in emergency situations and for helping them prepare for crises. But we need your help to be able to communicate with you.

First, if you are not registered with the Consular Section, please consider doing so now, either in person or online at:  
<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>

Second, keep us informed of your contact information (email address, telephone number, mobile phone number).

Finally, take a few minutes to review how well your household is prepared for a crisis. A good place to begin this review is on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) guide to preparing for crises at:  
<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>

### **Consular Section**

#### **American Citizens Services**

Presernova 31  
1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Phone (+386-1) 200-5595 or 200-5599  
FAX (+386-1) 200-5535  
Email: [Consular@usembassy.si](mailto:Consular@usembassy.si)

#### **Office Hours**

Mon.-Fri. 09:00 – 11:30 and  
14:00 – 16:00

#### **American Citizen Emergencies**

(after hours, weekends, holidays)  
Phone (+386-1) 200-5556 or  
200-5557

THE CONSULAR SECTION IS CLOSED ON U.S. AND  
SLOVENIAN NATIONAL HOLIDAYS  
<http://www.ljubljana.usembassy.gov/holidays.html>)

## **Income Tax Tips for 2005**

For a comprehensive list of Tax Tips for 2005, go to:

[http://www.ljubljana.usembassy.gov/irs\\_tax\\_tips\\_for\\_2005.html](http://www.ljubljana.usembassy.gov/irs_tax_tips_for_2005.html)

Or visit our website at

<http://www.ljubljana.usembassy.gov>

We recently received a shipment of IRS forms and booklets for Tax Year 2004, with more to come. They are here for pickup or we can mail them to you. Please call us to check that we have the forms you need. Additionally, most forms and publications are available online and can be downloaded at **IRS.gov**.

For personal assistance: Note that the IRS office at the U.S. Embassy in Rome has closed. Slovenia is now served by the IRS office at the U.S. Embassy in Paris.

### **IRS-Paris**

#### **Mailing Address:**

American Embassy  
Room E-414  
2, Avenue Gabriel  
75382 Paris Cedex 08

#### **Office Address:**

U.S. Consulate  
4th Floor  
2, rue St. Florentin  
75001 Paris

**Tel:** 33 1.43.12.25.55

**Fax:** 33 1.43.12.47.52

**email:** [irs.paris@irs.gov](mailto:irs.paris@irs.gov)

#### **Website:**

<http://www.amb-usa.fr/IRS/IRS.HTM>

## **IBRS: Internet-Based Registration System**

The Department of State recently launched a secure online travel registration website on which American citizens can record foreign trip and residence information that the Department and the Embassy can use to communicate with them and provide assistance during an emergency.

Both Americans planning travel abroad and Americans who live abroad can benefit from registering on this new system, accessible at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. We invite you to register yourself and your family and to get acquainted with travel registration. If you have already registered with the Embassy in Ljubljana, please re-register online to update your records.

This new Internet travel registration service for American citizens allows you to register and update your contact information on the Internet at any time, making it easier for you to keep information current. The site also provides up-to-date travel information customized to your unique travel agenda and itinerary. The data you provide is secured behind Department of State firewalls and is accessed by authorized personnel only under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

Let us know how you like the new site. If you encounter any difficulties or have questions about our travel registration website, please send an email to [CAIbrs@state.gov](mailto:CAIbrs@state.gov).

If you have specific questions about your registration with this Embassy, please contact us at [Consular@usembassy.si](mailto:Consular@usembassy.si)

## **Absentee Voting Assistance: Register Now!**

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) highly recommends that overseas citizens complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and submit it every year. In addition to informing the local election official of the citizen's current mailing address, submitting the FPCA will register or confirm the citizen's registration, and acts as a request for absentee ballots for any elections to be held that year.

Remember to include any change of address when completing the FPCA. Call us at the Consular Section if you need assistance.

For additional information about voting assistance for Americans living overseas, and to download the FPCA, check the FVAP's website at <http://www.fvap.gov/>

## Q and A: Dual Nationality?

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| <b>Question:</b><br><br>I am considering acquiring Slovene citizenship. If I choose to obtain Slovene citizenship, will this endanger my U.S. citizenship? Do I have to choose one or the other? | <b>Answer:</b><br><br>As far as U.S. law is concerned, your acquiring Slovene citizenship would have no affect on your U.S. citizenship. However, you may find that Slovene law has provisions requiring some applicants to renounce any existing citizenship. Check the Government of Slovenia's website at: <a href="http://www.mnz.si/en/1331.php">http://www.mnz.si/en/1331.php</a> .<br>For more information about dual nationality, check the Department of State's website at:<br><a href="http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1753.html">http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1753.html</a>           |
| <b>Question:</b><br><br>My spouse is interested in acquiring U.S. citizenship. Can she do that at the Embassy?   | <b>Answer:</b><br><br>To qualify for naturalization, a person generally must first become a legal permanent resident and reside in the U.S. for five years. Applications for naturalization are made to the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Citizenship Immigration Services (USCIS) in the U.S. For more information check the <a href="http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/English.pdf">Guide to Naturalization</a> at <a href="http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/English.pdf">http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/English.pdf</a> . If you need assistance applying, please contact the Consular Section. |
| <b>Question:</b><br><br>My spouse is Slovene; I'm an American. What does that make our child? Does he have to choose between the two when he reaches age 18?                                     | <b>Answer:</b><br><br>Usually, the child of an American citizen acquires U.S. citizenship at birth. However, there are several determining factors. Check with the Consular Section to confirm. Similarly, your child is very likely also a Slovene citizen. Check with Slovene authorities to confirm. United States law does not require that a child decide or choose a nationality when he/she reaches 18 years of age.  |

### **Federal Benefits: Direct Deposit is Coming!**

Consular staff is responsible for assisting people who receive federal benefits (including Social Security benefits). The Social Security Administration has informed us that in the coming year we will transition to a direct deposit system. This means Social Security beneficiaries residing in Slovenia can elect to receive their monthly benefits via direct deposit to their bank accounts in Slovenia. Direct deposit is faster and reduces errors. We will contact all beneficiaries when this new system becomes available. For more information about Social Security and other benefits, call the Consular Section or visit the Social Security Administration's website at <http://www.ssa.gov/>

- Are you a resident of Slovenia but you are still paying for Medicare? If so, consider terminating, as there are no Medicare benefits available for people living outside the U.S.

- Are you getting ready to retire? You can file your application for Social Security benefits with our consular staff.

## Useful Links:

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| <p>U.S. Embassy-Ljubljana<br/><a href="http://www.ljubljana.usembassy.gov/">http://www.ljubljana.usembassy.gov/</a></p> <p>Internal Revenue Service<br/><a href="http://www.irs.gov/">http://www.irs.gov/</a></p> <p>IRS Paris<br/><a href="http://www.amb-usa.fr/IRS/IRS.HTM">http://www.amb-usa.fr/IRS/IRS.HTM</a></p> <p>Taxpayer Advocate Service<br/><a href="http://www.irs.gov/advocate/">http://www.irs.gov/advocate/</a></p> <p>Dept. of State Info. on Emergencies and Crises<br/><a href="http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html">http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html</a></p> <p>FEMA's guide to preparing for crises<br/><a href="http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/">http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/</a></p> <p>Travel and Living Abroad<br/><a href="http://www.state.gov/travel/">http://www.state.gov/travel/</a></p> <p>Dept. of State on Dual Nationality:<br/><a href="http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1753.html">http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1753.html</a></p> | <p>Internet-Based Registration Service (IBRS)<br/><a href="https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/">https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/</a></p> <p>U.S. Department of Homeland Security<br/><a href="http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/">http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/</a></p> <p>Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)<br/><a href="http://www.fvap.gov/">http://www.fvap.gov/</a></p> <p>A Guide to (U.S.) Naturalization:<br/><a href="http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/English.pdf">http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/English.pdf</a></p> <p>Social Security online<br/><a href="http://www.ssa.gov/">http://www.ssa.gov/</a></p> <p>Acquisition of Slovenian Citizenship<br/><a href="http://www.mnz.si/en/1331.php">http://www.mnz.si/en/1331.php</a></p> <p>Slovenian Residency Permits<br/><a href="http://www.mnz.si/en/1332.php">http://www.mnz.si/en/1332.php</a></p> <p>Government of Slovenia homepage<br/><a href="http://www.sigov.si/">http://www.sigov.si/</a></p> |
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### New Biometric U.S. Passports: on the way

The U.S. Department of State is developing a new biometric passport that is scheduled to be introduced later this year. The new generation biometric U.S. passports will include a digital image of the bearer's face and biographic information on an electronic chip embedded in the passport. The U.S. and E.U. member countries are transitioning to biometric passports as a means of reducing immigration fraud and countering terrorism. All previous types of U.S. passports will continue to be valid until their expiry dates.